

# Employment Services for People with Disabilities

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## Mission

The mission of employment services for people with disabilities is to assist them in making informed career choices and in utilizing available community support services to prepare for, secure, retain, or regain employment.

## Summary of Activities

Through the Division of Disability, Aging, and Rehabilitative Services (DDARS), Vocational Rehabilitation Services (VRS) assists people with disabilities to obtain essential services which will empower them to achieve equality of opportunity, gainful employment, independent living skills, economic and social self-sufficiency, and full inclusion in society. Some of the services that VRS provides include: counseling and guidance, referrals to vocational/community supported employment agencies, training, restoration services, and job placement assistance. Services are initiated in the individual's home community whenever possible through partnerships with local agencies, rehabilitation programs, and employers.



Employment services for people with severe disabilities include the Randolph Shepard Blind Vending Program, independent living centers, and supported employment for the developmentally disabled, deaf, hard of hearing, and those with mental illness.

## External Factors

Employment services for the disabled have changed dramatically in the past few years. Federal legislation and state plans have focused on integrated community employment as well as person-centered planning. More people with disabilities are considering small business and self-employment as a viable employment outcome. The federal Ticket to Work and Work Incentive Improvement Act (TWWIA) passed by Congress in 1999 represents a significant opportunity for increasing the employment of people with disabilities. TWWIA allows individuals with disabilities to get job-related training and placement assistance from an approved provider of their choice. This provision enables individuals to use providers whose resources best meet their needs, including going directly to employers. The second measure expands health care coverage so that individuals with disabilities will be able to become employed without fear of losing their health insurance. TWWIA in Indiana was implemented in November 2002. Tickets can be assigned to both Employment Networks and Vocational Rehabilitative Services. The Ticket to Work Program began at a slow pace in Indiana but is picking up momentum. Statewide, 154 tickets have been assigned to Indiana with 117 of those tickets being assigned to Vocational Rehabilitation Services (VRS). The Ticket to Work Program is strongly supported by VR and planning and is underway to significantly increase the number of ticket assignments to VRS.

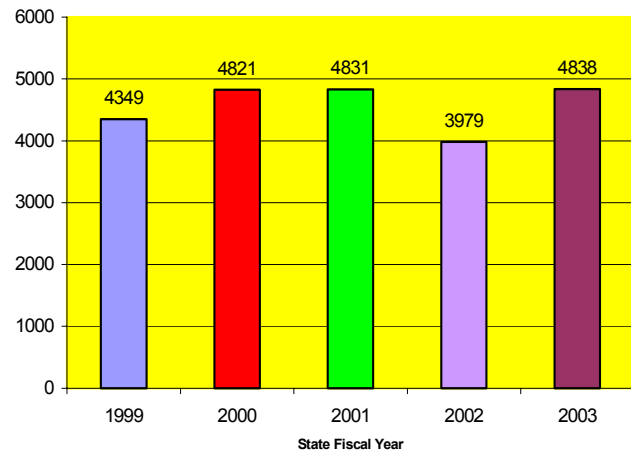
## Evaluation and Accomplishments

VRS has increased employment outcomes from 4,349 in 1999 to 4,818 to date. Over these five years, 992 more individual lives and that of their dependents have been significantly improved because the clients are gainfully employed. Blind and Visually Impaired Services (BVIS), served over 2,500 individuals in 2002 through a combination of direct service, training, and administration of the Blind Registry and Older Blind Grant Program. Information and referral contacts through phone calls, tours, presentations, and mailings make up for an additional 1,000 individual contacts. The program provides setup and ongoing assistance and support to eligible blind individuals in the management of small businesses in the area of food service. Licensed managers increased to an all time high of 75 with 10 individuals successfully completing training. In State Fiscal Year 2002, Deaf and

Hard of Hearing Services served approximately 3,500 people, provided approximately 3,000 information and referral contacts, and provided interpreters and case management services for over 1,600 deaf persons. Interpreter standards have been developed to ensure that qualified interpreters are available to effectively communicate on behalf of deaf persons.

The Disability Determination Bureau adjudicates approximately 74,000 applications for Social Security benefits each year. This includes both Social Security Disability Insurance and Supplemental Security Income disability claims. The value of this function is critical in assisting those who qualify to maintain a source of income necessary to sustain themselves and their families. There are nine Independent Living Centers in the State of Indiana, and a tenth Independent Living Center is being established in an unserved area of the state.

**VRS Employment Outcomes Statewide**



## Plans for the Biennium

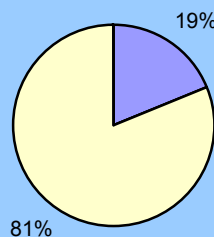
Over the next biennium, community employment will continue to be an integral part of Vocational Rehabilitation as well as other DDARS programs. DDARS will look at innovative ways to use their resources and partnerships within the community to assure every individual with a disability has the opportunity to work. In addition, VRS will continue to be part of the Workforce Investment Act's One-Stop System. The focus will be a seamless system, where choice and self determination are key components for the customer.

Program: 0350

|             | Actual<br>FY 2001 | Actual<br>FY 2002 | Estimate<br>FY 2003 | Appropriation<br>FY 2004 | Appropriation<br>FY 2005 |
|-------------|-------------------|-------------------|---------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| (All Funds) | \$118,859,099     | \$121,215,973     | \$124,166,109       | \$118,131,603            | \$118,131,603            |

### Sources of Funds FY 2004 (Approp)

General Dedicated Federal Other



### Uses of Funds FY 2004 (Approp)

Personal Services Distributions Capital Other

